

## ALBERTA CROP CONDITIONS REPORT # 5

### As of July 2, 2009

#### Provincial

Virtually all areas in the province received precipitation over the past 2 week period, principally in the form of scattered showers. Though quantities were not large, the moisture has provided some respite to crops which were under moderate to severe drought stress. Temperatures remain on the cool side of normal with day time values having to struggle into the mid 20's. The cooler temperatures have been a mixed blessing as they reduced crop stress but impeded crop development which remains 10 – 14 days behind normal. Sub soil moisture is rated (June 18<sup>th</sup> values): 58% poor (49%)/ 33% fair (37%)/ 9% good (14%)/ 0% excellent (0%).

Provincial crop condition ratings continue to decline for all crops in all regions.

Provincial Crop Conditions (July 2/09)				
Crop	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Spr. Wheat	37%	44%	18%	1%
Durum	31%	45%	23%	1%
Barley	38%	43%	18%	1%
W. Cereals	55%	36%	9%	0%
Canola	52%	31%	16%	1%
Field Peas	45%	37%	17%	1%

Regional Crop Condition Rating Index (July 2, 2009)						
Crop	South	Central	NE	NW	Peace	Alberta
Spr. Wheat	87.4	67.1	71.6	67.0	87.7	75.8
Durum	86.9	61.4	67.5	---	---	78.8
Barley	87.0	68.2	70.0	66.8	86.4	75.4
W. Cereals	81.1	62.2	64.5	63.2	---	67.4
Canola	78.5	62.9	65.0	57.4	90.7	70.3
Field Peas	83.0	64.0	65.9	60.9	93.0	72.7

Insect pests have not been a problem thus far. With the continuing dry conditions, 20% of the province is now rating grasshopper and flea beetle populations at moderate to excessive levels.

Forage crops have suffered severely, particularly pastures. Most regions expect only minimal recovery to their pastures with the worst areas indicating their pastures may have gone into dormancy. There are widespread reports of hay and cereal crops meant for greenfeed, being pastured. Pastures are rated 69% poor/ 26% fair/ 5% good. Hay crops have fared only slightly better. First cut haying is underway with 9% of the dryland crop and 40% of the irrigated crop harvested. Dryland yields are well below average and over 70% is currently rated poor/fair for quality. Irrigated yields are down slightly due to the cool spring with 75% of the production rated good/excellent for quality. Hay conditions are rated 62% poor/ 30% fair/ 8% good.

#### Southern Alberta

The region received 25 – 40 mm of precipitation across the southern tier and spotty showers in the north portion. Crops remain 7 – 14 days behind normal in development. Sub soil moisture ratings have declined to 28% poor (11%)/ 45% fair (53%)/ 27% good (35%)/ 0% excellent (1%).

**Crop stage averages:**

Spr. Wheat, Durum, Barley – flag leaf stage

Winter Cereals – early pollination

Canola – 35% flowering (15% still pre rosette stage)

Field Peas – 52% flowering

Crop condition ratings declined for all crops with most crops rated approximately 15% below normal. Insect pests are currently not a problem but reports of leaf hoppers on cereals and cabbage seed pod weevil on canola will have to be watched.

Pasture ratings have declined further and are rated 46% poor/ 38% fair/ 15% good/ 1% excellent. Dryland haying is 14% completed with 71% rated good/excellent for quality. Irrigated haying is 44% completed with 81% rated good/excellent for quality. Hay ratings have declined slightly to 46% rated poor/ 33% fair/ 21% good/ 0% excellent.

**Central Alberta**

The region remains extremely dry with scattered showers, sufficient to provide a small amount of respite and to allow seed to germinate which had been reseeded or seeded late for silage/ greenfeed use. Soil moisture conditions are poor throughout the entire region but most critical in the eastern portion along the Saskatchewan border. Sub soil moisture is rated at 55% poor (49%)/ 40% fair (33%)/ 5% good (18%).

Grasshoppers are not a concern at this time but 20% of the region is rating flea beetle populations at moderate to over threshold levels.

**Crop stage averages:**

Spr. Wheat, Durum – early boot stage

Barley – late flag leaf

Winter Cereals – late head emergence

Canola – 14% flowering (29% in pre rosette stage)

Field Peas – 22% flowering

Crop condition ratings declined for all crops with current values at 60 – 65% of normal. 28% of first cut dryland hay has been harvested with poor yields and poor to fair quality. Hay conditions are rated at 77% poor/ 20% fair/ 3% good. Pastures are rated 78% poor/ 20% fair/ 2% good.

**North East Alberta**

Most areas received precipitation from scattered showers in the south portion to rain in the north which has stabilized crop conditions though conditions are still extremely poor. Sub soil moisture conditions are rated 72% poor (70%)/ 17% fair (28%)/ 11% good (2%).

Grasshoppers are becoming a problem as 40% of the region is rating populations at moderate with a further 18% rating populations at over threshold levels. Flea beetles are rated at over threshold levels in 36% of the region.

**Crop stage averages:**

Spr. Wheat, Barley – mid stem elongation

Winter Cereals – mid head emergence

Canola – 6% flowering (32% in pre rosette stages)

Field Peas – 10% flowering (20% still in 4 – 6 node stage)

Crop condition ratings declined for all crops except canola which improved slightly. Current ratings stand at 65 – 70% of normal. Pastures are extremely poor with 91% rated poor and 9% fair. First cut haying is only 1% completed and rated 79% poor/ 19% fair/ 2% good.

#### **Northwest Alberta**

All areas received spotty showers with the extreme west receiving rain. Sub soil moisture is rated at 75% poor (68%)/ 25% fair (29%)/ 0% good (3%). Crop condition ratings have declined significantly over the past two week period to 60 – 65% of normal.

Grasshoppers are becoming a concern with 23% of the region rated at moderate population levels and 3% at over threshold levels. 4% of the region rates flea beetle populations as over threshold.

Crop stage averages;

Spr. Wheat, Barley – mid boot stage

Winter Cereals – mid head emergence

Canola – 10% flowering (45% still in pre rosette stages)

Field Peas – 10% flowering (34% still in 4 – 6 node stage)

Haying is 8% completed with quality rated as poor to fair. Hay conditions improved slightly to 69% poor/ 31% fair. Pasture condition ratings are virtually unchanged at 74% poor/ 26% fair.

#### **Peace River Alberta**

Most areas received scattered showers but a good soaking rain is needed to bring along a very promising crop. Sub soil moisture is rated at 62% poor (46%)/ 34% fair (43%)/ 4% good (11%). Crop condition ratings have declined significantly to 85 – 90% of normal.

Grasshoppers are becoming a concern with 13% of the region rating populations at the moderate to over threshold levels.

Crop stage averages:

Spr. Wheat, Barley – early stem elongation

Canola – 20% flowering (15% in pre rosette stages)

Field Peas – 2% flowering

No first cut haying is reported. Hay conditions are rated 34% poor/ 49% fair/ 17% good. Pastures are rating lower at 54% poor/ 41% fair/ 5% good.

Prepared by Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, in cooperation with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. For more information, please contact the writer.

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